***Press* Release**

The Meteorological Office

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The Met. Office prepares for 9/9/99.

The Met. Office has prepared for the possibility of computer problems on Thursday 9 September (9/9/99). The type of difficulties which could be faced are not unlike those of the millennium bug, but on this occasion it is the representation of Thursday's date as 9999 in computer software which is causing the uncertainty. Following the completion of The Met. Office's Y2K testing the risk of disruption to weather forecasts and services associated with this date change is considered to be very low.

The Met. Office has put together detailed plans to cope with 1 January 2000, and is using the opportunity on Wednesday night and Thursday to put these plans to the test. An Executive Management Team will be in operation as the crucial hours around midnight on Wednesday night pass by.

The team will test out procedures to ensure all crucial services are delivered and will inform customers of difficulties if any occur. They will also invoke detailed recovery plans in the unlikely event of any critical parts of the organisation experiencing problems.

Roger Hunt, Business Director at The Met. Office said: "We have carried out detailed investigations of how the 9999 date issue may affect our weather forecasts and services. We believe the risks are small but we need and process vast amounts of data from all over the world; so problems anywhere in the world could impact on the quality of our forecasts for the United Kingdom. We will do everything we can to maintain our weather services, and at the same time use the opportunity to test our plans for the really big date at the end of the year."

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